

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrainmagazine

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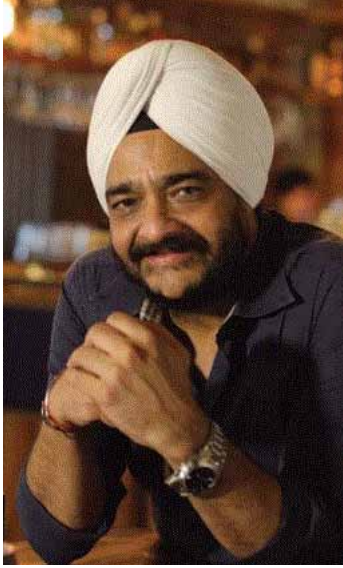
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Gurbaxish Singh Kohli

Vice President
FHRAI

Dear fellow members,

As a part of our continued and ongoing efforts seeking some kind of support in the form of stimulus from the government such as exclusive relief package for the hospitality industry and statutory benefits, we have again updated the Hon'ble Prime Minister, relevant Cabinet Ministers, Chief Ministers and Senior Government Officials about the arduous time which the hospitality industry is facing presently.

In addition to various initiatives, we wrote to Shri. Amit Shah, Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI and Shri Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce & Industry regarding the Unlock Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, with reference to the 'Issue of permissions for foreign charter flights to land at Dabolim Airport, Goa carrying foreign tourists'. We have requested the Ministry of Home Affairs to amend its Unlock Guidelines so as to permit direct charter flights to land in Goa as they have been operating since 1990 with all the strict guidelines which are followed by countries all the over the world, who cater to foreign inbound charter flights.

The much-needed industry status granted by Maharashtra government to the hospitality sector would come with incentives such as reduction in the unit pricing of many utility payments and duties to the state which were till now being charged at commercial tariff rates. In our web interaction with Shri Aaditya Thackeray, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism for the State, earlier in May, we had expressed the sector's sore point on this topic. He had assured us resolution on this issue and five months later, he has acted on it. This shows the government's commitment towards promoting hospitality and tourism in the state. In our recent interaction with Shri Piyush Goyal, we highlighted the issues faced by hotels and restaurants in playing live and recorded music by multiple parties. The law contains provisions for copyright societies,

compulsory licensing of works, and fixing of licensing fees. FHRAI hopes that the GOI will ensure that there is only one copyright society which ensures reasonable charges, which are either event based or for the whole year. Also, as the hospitality establishments are struggling to restart or sustain their operations due to negative cash flows, we wrote to Capt. Amarinder Singh, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Punjab, regarding 'Relaxations in the curfew timings for hotels, restaurants and banquet halls'. We requested the state CM to allow the close family members to attend the rituals post 9.30 pm and allow the guests to finish the meals and leave comfortably, at the same time, adhering to the rules that no new guests will be allowed to enter the premises after 9.30 pm.

In addition to the above, on behalf of the hospitality fraternity, FHRAI concluded the process of formulating recommendations to the Union Budget 2021-2022. I am thankful to all the members for their valuable inputs which we have incorporated in our recommendations as part of the dossier and submitted to the Government of India. Ministry of Finance shall now review the recommendations on the basis of its justifications submitted by us on each proposal. Upon receiving any update, the FHRAI Secretariat shall circulate the information to all members, accordingly.

Be safe.

Note: The November 2020 edition of the FHRAI magazine will not be available as a printed version due to the pandemic. However, the e-version of the same shall be available on the FHRAI website and circulated to all members as broadcast on registered email.

With kind regards,

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli

Vice President, FHRAI



The much needed industry status granted by Maharashtra govt to the sector would come with incentives



NOVEMBER 2020

NIDHI TO EMPOWER BUSINESSES

10

NIDHI will help in boosting guests' confidence that has taken a beating because of the COVID-19 pandemic, says Dr. Himanshu Talwar, ASG, FHRAI.

Cover Image:
Shiv Niwas Palace, Udaipur, Rajasthan



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'WORK-CATIONS' PICKING UP 30

Working from hotels or 'work-cation' has not only emerged as the latest trend, but also an innovative solution for hotels to earn revenue.

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We offer co-branding, complete revenue management, centralised reservations & accounts reconciliation, says Chandan Pandey, Co-Founder & COO, WB Hotels & Resorts.



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FHRAI seeks govt intervention

If the government continues to ignore us then not just hotels and restaurants but also millions of jobs will vanish, says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has submitted a representation to the government requesting for its urgent intervention in supporting the hospitality industry in its recovery. The apex hospitality association has cited the latest report from the ratings agency – ICRA, indicating that the Indian hospitality industry's recovery to pre-pandemic levels is at least three years away. With zero foreign exchange earnings and less than 10 per cent of pre-pandemic revenues, the sector is facing an existential crisis. With a decline in revenues by approximately 85 per cent in the first quarter of the current financial year, the hospitality industry is staring at an imminent collapse if the required support does not come through.

"It is extremely unlikely that the industry will be able to achieve even 25 per cent of pre-pandemic revenues in the immediate future. The alarm has gone off and we are in a state of complete panic. We have been urging the government to lend us the required support ever since the lockdown was announced, but not much has come through. We are again knocking on the door, with the hope that the government takes notice of ICRA's projection of our industry's desperate condition. If the government continues to ignore us then not just hotels and restaurants but also millions of jobs dependent on these businesses will vanish," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

India's hospitality and tourism industry accounts for roughly 10 per cent of the country's GDP. It also contributes significantly in Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE). Going by size, the hospitality industry is the biggest employment generator of both direct and indirect jobs. The industry supported 87.5 million jobs, translating to 12.75 per cent of total employment in the year 2018-19.

"Hotels and restaurants are reeling under massive debts and no revenues for over seven months on account of the sudden lockdown. Consumer confidence is still low and since reopening, hotels on average have registered not more than 20 to 30 per cent occupancies.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

Hotels and restaurants are reeling under massive debts and no revenues



Pradeep Shetty
Jt. Hon Secretary, FHRAI

The recovery of the sector is going to be a long drawn out affair

This time of the year is usually the holiday season for hotels in the country but bookings are at an all-time low. There is no hope of business from international tourists and bookings in domestic tourism too are subdued. We have been asking the government for a complete waiver of interest for hospitality establishments for the

lockdown and moratorium period. We urge the government to offer us a concrete policy to support the industry," adds Kohli.

The FHRAI has also opposed recommendations made by the KV Kamath Committee stating that it has made the conditions for restructuring loans even more stringent than before. The association is of the opinion that the parameters in the report are unrealistic and that the plan is unfavourable for the hospitality industry.

"The new benchmarks are far more stringent than before. Additionally, the Kamath Committee is treating non-payment as defaulting which cannot be since the present situation is due to the government imposed lockdown and not due to any default on the part of the borrower. Therefore, we request for a complete review of the Kamath Committee recommendations on priority basis and to undertake a hospitality specific outlook considering the peculiarity of this industry. We urge the government for loan extensions be given to the hospitality sector on similar lines as those given under the Prime Minister's scheme for loans below ₹25 crores to SMEs and MSMEs," says **Pradeep Shetty**, Jt. Honorary Secretary, FHRAI.

The FHRAI has also demanded that the credit rating of loans by credit rating agencies working under SEBI guidelines be abolished until September 2021 or until complete normalcy resumes.

"Hospitality sector is a labour and capital intensive industry which is dependent on travel. The industry was the first casualty of the pandemic and from here it appears like it will be the last sector to revive. The recovery of the sector is going to be a long drawn out affair without full-fledged resumption of domestic travel in the country. This is co-existent with the increased focus on health, hygiene and introduction of preventive vaccine against the pandemic. At least 40 to 50 per cent restaurants and approximately 30 to 40 per cent hotels in the country will shut down permanently resulting in millions of job losses. We request the government for immediate support if industry has to survive," concludes Shetty.

Ghost Town

Relief for restaurants in Delhi



The Delhi government has issued an order dated November 3, 2020 notifying the termination of the process of granting approvals to standalone restaurants in the capital.

Hotel and Restaurant Association of North India (HRANI) has been taking up industry concerns with various departments of the Central and state government through representations. Various memorandums on ease of doing business have been sent to the government.

In a major relief to Delhi city restaurants amid the COVID-19 outbreak, the Delhi government issued an order dated November 3, 2020 notifying the termination of the process of granting approvals to



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

standalone restaurants in the capital. The notification to remove grant of approval by the Tourism Department to standalone restaurants will encourage their economic growth and generate employment.

We welcome the decision of the government of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi and are thankful to the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister for easing the industry," stated **Surendra Kumar Jaiswal**, President, HRANI and Vice President of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India.. "Such steps especially after a major economic downfall due to the lockdown will definitely help the industry generate more employment in the city through higher demand," added Jaiswal.

HRANI



Such steps will definitely help the industry generate more employment



UP govt asked to refund excise fee

HRANI has taken up industry concerns with Uttar Pradesh Excise Department requesting the government of Uttar Pradesh to adjust or refund excise fee paid in advance.

Taking into account the period of lockdown and non-operations from March 22, 2020 to September 4, 2020, the apex industry body of the north region, Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India has sent a letter to the Hon'ble Additional Chief Secretary, Excise & Commissioner Excise, government of Uttar Pradesh to adjust/

refund excise fee paid in advance. The letter from the association listed the following requests for the fraternity.

Adjustment / Refund of excise license fee paid: Due to lockdown and non-operations of bars from March 22, 2020 to September 4, 2020, the excise fee paid by licensee bars, hotels and restaurants for the

non-operations period should be either refunded or adjusted for at least six months of the next financial year.

Service of liquor to be allowed till 12.00 midnight: Following the timings in line with the excise license, the timings of service of liquor (bar operations) should be allowed till 12.00 midnight in place of 10.00 pm. The letter also mentioned the adjustment facility extended by states and also listed the advisory issued by the MOT, Govt of India to provide relief.

HRANI



Excise fee paid for the non-operations period should be refunded or adjusted



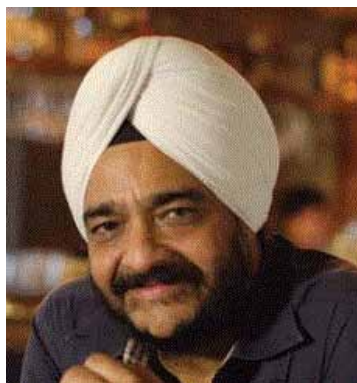
Registration mandatory for vendors

FSSAI has responded to our request and is taking steps to look into any unregulated and illegal dark kitchens, says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President of FHRAI.

The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has saluted Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI's) enforcement rules making registration necessary for home-cooked food vendors.

The hospitality association has said that food operators, whether operating from home or from dark kitchens, should be controlled for neatness and hygiene. If a law is applicable for hotels and restaurants, then it should be applicable to any such food-delivering businesses. It has also said that unregistered, unregulated Food Business Operators (FBOs) may not be complying with the hygiene standards, which is harmful for the consumers and increases health risks. The FHRAI has expressed gratitude to the FSSAI for taking action on the appeals made by it.

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President of FHRAI, stated, "FSSAI has responded to our request and is taking



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

authorities and we are happy that we have been heard. We had even written to the DPIIT regarding concerns about the unregulated sector run by FSAs. The FSAs are actually advocating illegal business under the guise of discounts and low-priced food. If the FSAs stop permitting such illegal businesses on their apps, these businesses will follow legal rules and will start applying for licenses automatically."

Pradeep Shetty, Joint Honorary Secretary of FHRAI and VP



FSAs are actually advocating illegal business under the guise of discounts

steps to look into any unregulated and illegal dark kitchens. A few of these are actually financed and driven by the Food Service Aggregators (FSAs) to escape responsibilities related to operating restaurants legally and of course, also taxes. The state and the exchequer suffer from huge losses."

Previously, in its representations to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the FHRAI had raised concerns about FSAs listing such illegal establishments on their portals or food delivery applications. It had advised to the Ministry that FSAs were involved in motivating and giving identity to several unregistered dark kitchen operators.

Kohli further said, "We are grateful to the FSSAI for considering the issue and taking harsh action. We have been bringing it to the notice of

of HRAWI, added, "At the beginning, the FSAs had entered the market as food delivery service providers, but today claim to be a component of the hospitality industry which they aren't. Now they have initiated their own financed establishments under various names, many of which are just dark kitchens functioning without any licenses. All they do is to make the food look appealing to the customer on the app and the kitchen's hygiene has never been a concern. They advertise it blatantly online with massive discounts and hence adversely affect the legally sound restaurants and hotels."

"Restaurants and hotels are subjected to strictness of state and Central laws for running food businesses, but these illegal businesses function without any licences. They don't stick to any regulations especially in the field of hygiene and cleanliness. This is inequitable, biased and most importantly it handicaps legal businesses although they do the authentic work," Shetty concluded.



Pradeep Shetty
Jt Hon Secretary, FHRAI



FSAs claim to be a component of the hospitality industry which they aren't

HRAWI



NIDHI to empower BUSINESSES

NIDHI will help in boosting guests' confidence that has taken a beating because of the COVID-19 pandemic, says **Dr. Himanshu Talwar**, ASG, FHRAI.



Himanshu Talwar

Hospitality industry is recognised as one of the key sectors of development in all countries and a major source of income, jobs, and wealth creation. It also plays a wider role in promoting the image and international perception of a country/ state/ city externally as well as influencing complementary domestic policies. This range of influence and importance creates opportunities as well as brings the challenges faced to measure competitiveness in hospitality.

In recent years, hospitality has emerged as one of the world's most important industries in terms of its contribution towards the GDP and overall economy of a nation. As demand for exemplary services in the hospitality industry continues to rise overall, its

contribution to GDP has taken a new leap, however, the competitiveness challenge takes on new features with the growth of emerging economies, resulting in creating a new pressure on the market position of developed economies.

With the explosion of the "Digital Way of Life", the guests journey has become increasingly complex, forcing hospitality professionals to overhaul not only their corporate and marketing strategies but also their technology stack, in order to engage, acquire, service, and retain these digitally-enabled travel consumers across multiple digital touch points and all digital channels and devices.

The National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (NIDHI) is an initiative towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat to use technology to empower hospitality businesses. NIDHI is not just a database. It aspires to become a gateway to opportunities for the hospitality industry. NIDHI is a joint initiative of the Central and state governments in partnership with the fraternity



NIDHI aspires to become a gateway to opportunities for the hospitality industry



to create a digital platform for the hospitality industry. On the occasion of World Tourism Day 2020, India brought forth a database (NIDHI) of the hospitality industry. This database will help in boosting guests' confidence that has taken a beating because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The system is worked out in association with the Quality Council of India (QCI) to boost confidence in the minds of the guests. The platform will enable the hospitality industry access services of the Ministry of Tourism such as COVID-19 related protocols through SAATHI, classification and re-classification services, listing on incredible India web portal and mobile app, skill development and capacity building programmes and other such services.

Availability of digitised information about hospitality units across the country will be crucial in framing policies and strategies for the promotion and development of the hospitality and tourism sector. It will provide a clear picture on the geographical spread of the hospitality sector, its size, structure, and existing capacity. This will help in assessing carrying capacities of various destinations and in planning for various new destinations. It will serve as a common repository of

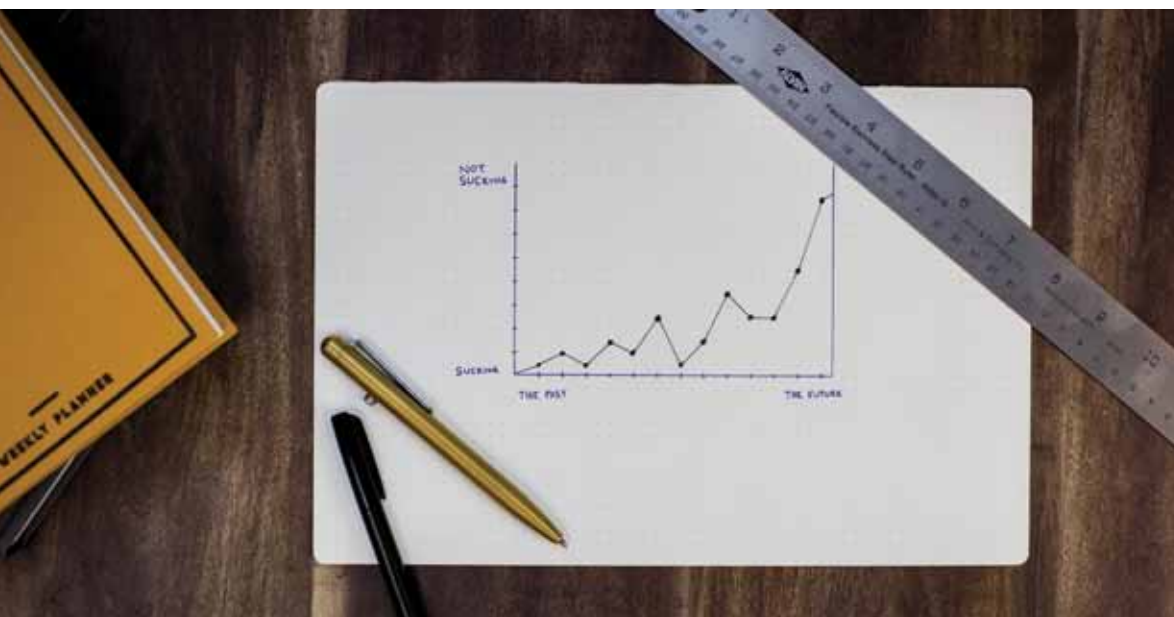
acting as an interface between the government, the hospitality fraternity and the guests.

Applying emerging technologies in the hospitality industry may help hospitality businesses gain the upper hand and stand out from competitors. The changes hospitality industry can go through due to the digital revolution are immense. Fortunately, introducing innovations is a rewarding experience, since guests instantly respond with increased satisfaction, positive feedback, and higher retention rates.

The platform has a simple registration process for hospitality units in various categories viz., hotels, resorts, guest houses, bed and breakfast/ homestays, farm stays, lodges/tourist homes, houseboats, heritage homes, timeshare units, apartment hotels, tented accommodation, standalone F&B units etc.



NIDHI will be an interface between the govt, the hospitality fraternity & guests



data from Ministry of Tourism, State Departments of Tourism and Industry and enhance the preparedness to manage any crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic by disseminating information, guidelines and protocols.

NIDHI will enable the Central and state governments to deliver better support and services including policies and strategies. It will also empower the hospitality industry to benefit from technology in availing various services. It will be a game changer for the industry by not only serving as a platform for the hospitality organisations to ideate, share best practices, and connect with the government for ease of doing business but also by

The registered unit is given a username and password and can update the information at any time.

It is indeed necessary for the hospitality fraternity to engage, register themselves and avail the multifaceted benefits attached to the scheme. It will also help the fraternity to consolidate its efforts and map its contribution towards GDP, job creation -- both direct and indirect, infrastructure development, foreign exchange earnings, etc. For more information, you may visit <https://tourism.gov.in/> <https://nidhi.nic.in/HotelDivision/Default.aspx> <https://saathi.qcin.org/>



'India ready for M!CE'



Prahlad Singh Patel

“M!CE can be the biggest platform to attract international tourists”

The Ministry of Tourism advocates that a stronger M!CE sector would inadvertently mean a more competent tourism industry



Nisha Verma

Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State (I/C), Tourism and Culture, has said that M!CE helps create an ideal image of the country and also benefits all stakeholders while providing employment at various levels. The government has made some changes to conferences owing to the new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which include a reduced delegate limit from 500 to 250 and instead of allowance for one night, an allowance of two nights has been made – a benefit that can be availed by guests.

“The industry should look at conferences and events not only for corporates, but also for lawyers and doctors. We can provide a platform to explore such opportunities. I believe that M!CE can be the biggest platform to attract international tourists and popularise India,” the Minister said in his address at the 13th Conventions India Conclave (CIC) by India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB).

Sharing a similar view, **Rakesh Verma**, Joint Secretary, MOT and Chairman, ICPB, claimed that growth of the M!CE industry is crucial for the growth of many other segments of the economy. “It impacts tourism, hospitality, event management and a host of other people in the supply chain. India has great potential for M!CE, the challenge lies in building a strong ‘Brand India’ for conventions and events, backing it up with delivering on promises. The government has to back

the industry in bringing more events and conventions. The government and industry must together build India as a M!CE destination,” he said.

He added that the first step would be to tell the world that India is ready to welcome more events and conventions. Verma said, “We have to aggressively market India as a M!CE destination; our missions abroad can be of great help. ICPB, as a nodal body, can play a key role in securing support from various ministries and other organisations, both for winning bids and for subsequent successful organisation of events. ICPB needs to be developed as a single window for meeting such needs.”

He stated that simultaneously, the country needs to prepare destinations for holding conventions and events, and meet the needs of visitors. “We must make conscious effort to make our destinations succeed,” Verma said.

“M!CE is a very dynamic industry and therefore, in order to stay in competition, it must constantly evolve and innovate. Digitalisation is a major challenge, and we must stay ahead,” he asserted, adding, “Having a stronger ICPB and good M!CE destinations are a few suggestions that have found place in our new tourism policy. Soon, we will formalise these policy initiatives which will give fillip to our efforts to strengthen the sector, enabling the synergy of MOT and industry.”

**Does your
hotel have a
COVID
compliance
certificate?**





Industry status granted

The Maharashtra government's recognition of hospitality as an 'industry' comes as a silver lining in the dark clouds, says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.

The Maharashtra state government has accorded hospitality sector the status of an industry. The status was actually accorded to the sector back in 1999 due to continuous efforts of FHRAI and HRAWI but had unfortunately remained only on paper and had no meaningful benefits. However, effective from April 1, 2021, hospitality as an industry will be levied tariffs and duties on electricity, water, property, development and non-agricultural taxes at industrial rates. HRAWI has welcomed the move and thanked the government in aiding the revival of the sector.

"The Maharashtra government's recognition of hospitality as an 'industry' comes as a silver lining in the dark clouds. We welcome the decision and applaud the dynamism and commitment shown by our young Hon'ble Tourism Minister – Shri Aaditya Thackeray. We are also thankful to the Hon'ble Chief Minister – Shri Uddhav Thackeray and the Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism – Valsa Nair Singh for their support to the industry. The status had remained only on paper for over two decades but now with its implementation, hospitality will be entitled to receive benefits under special schemes and subsidies, with minimal to no procedural roadblocks. This will unlock the massive potential that the sector holds. With such progressive and industry-friendly policies, Maharashtra leads in tourism efforts and sets the benchmark for other states to follow. We congratulate the entire fraternity," says **Sherry Bhatia**, President, HRAWI.

The government of Maharashtra had issued a Government Resolution (GR) dated April 7, 1999 conferring tourism sector the 'Status of Industry' but it was never implemented, until now. "The HRAWI brought to the attention of the state government the long overdue



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

Industry status unburdens the sector of utility payments & duties



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

Hospitality will be entitled to receive benefits under special schemes

resolution and requested that the GR be put into effect, especially during the post-COVID-19 period. I thank Shri Uddhav Thackeray and Shri Aaditya Thackeray for giving the sector what it needs and the timing couldn't have been better. With its implementation, the operating cost of hotels and other tourism related sectors will drastically come down," says **Vivek Nair**, Member of Honor, HRAWI and Past President, FHRAI.

The HRAWI had been following up with the governments over this matter to get the industry the associated benefits. It was however only in a recent meeting with the tourism minister that the subject got the attention it required.

"The industry status unburdens the sector of utility payments and duties to the state which were at commercial tariff rates. This includes some of the high cost items like electricity, water and property, among others. At industrial rates, the operational costs will go down to a great extent. This is a big relief for our sector and has come at a time when hotel and restaurant businesses are severely hit because of the pandemic enforced lockdown and low consumer confidence. During the lockdown, in our web interaction with Shri Aaditya Thackeray earlier in May, we had expressed the sector's sore point on this topic. He had assured us resolution on this issue and five months later, he has acted on it. This shows the government's commitment towards promoting hospitality and tourism in the state," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI.

"The HRAWI is grateful to Vivek Nair and all subsequent Presidents for having relentlessly pursued the hospitality sector's demand for industry status and which, has finally been realised," concludes Kohli.

**Is your
covid certificate
authenticated
by the
national board
of the country?**





Reviving the HOTEL INDUSTRY

FHRAI EC members share their recommendations for improving the hospitality industry which is the most affected of all segments of the economy due to the ongoing pandemic.



Neha Rawat



**Lakshyaraj Singh
Mewar**

Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar EC Member, FHRAI

The following recommendations will have a positive impact on tourism / hospitality / restaurants.

TAX HOLIDAY ON LOANS FOR ALL HOTEL SEGMENTS

There should be tax holiday on loans for all hotel segments, especially those who were investing in infrastructure / employees / marketing.

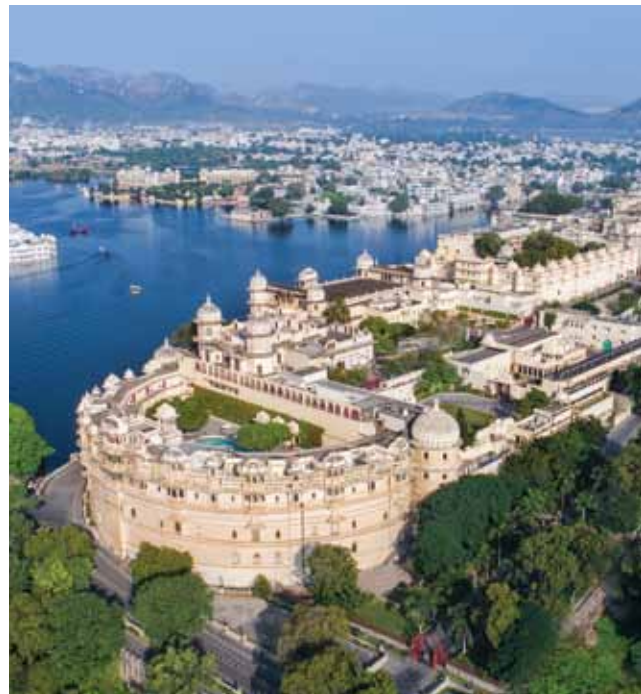
This measure is needed as revenue losses of 2020-21 have been unforeseen and every industry player has taken a major hit due to the pandemic.

CASH TRANSFER SCHEME

This scheme must be applicable to employees/ vendors as hotels with 50 or more employees/ vendors would be able to pay their salaries / dues.

SPECIAL INCOME TAX REBATE

We should consider a new scheme which offers special income tax rebate for the tourism



industry for a period of five years, that is, from 2020-2025. This five-year period is essential to recoup from the losses caused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also, issues related to management and staff should be looked into and resolved.



Every industry player has taken a major hit due to the pandemic



**Do you have
a **Global**
recognition
for
Covid safety?**





M. Venkada Subbu

M. Venkada Subbu **President, Tamil Nadu Hotels Association**

It is a well-known fact that travel industry is the most affected of all segments of the economy due to the ongoing pandemic with no end in sight till today. Within the travel industry, airlines and hotels which involve huge investments with big stakes held by banks, employees and owners are the worst affected.

Following are my recommendations for improving the industry which is a great multiplier of jobs for every rupee invested.

DEBT RELIEF

Hotels have to be provided immediate relief from debt servicing. The six-month moratorium was just a breather and it has to be supplemented by more such measures. Banks should be allowed to restructure loans without having to make higher provisioning as applicable to restructured loans. Banks loathe to restructure due to higher provisioning mandated by the RBI. This restructuring is due to the pandemic and not due to business failure. Hence allowing banks to restructure without higher provisioning will make banks that are reluctant, help hotels by restructuring their loans without hiking their interest rates.

REDUCTION IN RATE OF INTEREST

Banks should charge interest on term loans at MCLR rates or two per cent over their fixed deposit rates for the lockdown period and beyond till the industry revives. Hotels took an unfair hit during the pandemic. It is only fair that banks at least forego their profits for the lockdown period and reduce their interest margins till the industry recovers.

PROVISION TO CARRY LOSS BACKWARD

Hotels have remitted crores of rupees in taxes over the years. At this time, hotels should be allowed to carry backward their losses and adjust against the tax paid in the last two years and claim a refund. Many advanced countries have this provision to help loss making businesses recoup their losses to enable them to grow and become net taxpayers again.

SUBSIDY FOR HOTEL STAY AND RESTAURANT SPENDS

UK and Thailand are some of the countries that have partially reimbursed the travelling public for their hotel and restaurant bills. Indian government should do the same to kickstart the travel industry. UK announced that the British government will give diners a 50 per cent discount on their restaurant bills. Thailand has announced a stimulus programme that covers up to 40 per cent capped at THB3,000 per night for up to five nights at hotels on a single trip outside one's home province.

PAYROLL PROTECTION PROGRAMME

The Government of India should reimburse hotels to pay their employees' salaries during this pandemic. This will enable hotels to continue to pay salaries and prevent unemployment. USA is one country that has used this programme successfully by reimbursing hotels to continue to employ their labour force during this pandemic.

WAIVE PROPERTY TAXES

Property tax on hotels should be waived. Hotels are incurring a loss due to the pandemic and struggling to pay salaries. They should be relieved from paying property tax during this time.

EXTENSION OF TIME TO PERFORM EXPORT OBLIGATIONS

Hotels have export obligations for capital equipment imported as an integral part of the hotel project / renovation. Extension has to be provided to perform this obligation. With international travel near zero, hotels have zero foreign exchange earnings. As of now, they are unable to meet their export obligations. Hence, extension has to be provided to perform their export obligations till the industry revives to pre-pandemic levels.



Banks loathe to restructure due to higher provisioning mandated by the RBI



???

So many
Questions
and only
one
Answer!



Resurgence of demand

During the first half of fiscal 2021, branded hotels witnessed an occupancy of 23 per cent with an ARR of ₹3,910 per room per night, according to Noesis Capital Advisors.

CITY-WISE PERFORMANCE OF BRANDED HOTELS

CITY	OCCUPANCY RATE	ARR (INR/DAY/ROOM)
BUSINESS DESTINATIONS		
Mumbai Metropolitan Region	36%	4,800
Ahmedabad	32%	4,160
NCR	24%	3,520
Chennai	22%	3,690
Pune	19%	4,040
Hyderabad	17%	4,560
Kolkata	16%	3,500
Bengaluru	14%	3,210
LEISURE DESTINATIONS		
Kochi	27%	6,980
Udaipur	25%	3,790
Jaipur	24%	2,090
Agra	23%	1,680
Goa	17%	4,990
Thiruvananthapuram	17%	1,650

*Note: The study also includes hotels that are still not operational across these destinations.
Source: Noesis Capital Advisors*

The outbreak of COVID-19 resulted in one of the biggest setbacks for the global economy. Though every sector was impacted, tourism and hospitality were impacted the most. The imposed lockdown resulted in restricted travel and ended in the majority of hotels shutting down for more than 180 days. During the first half of fiscal 2021 (Apr 20 - Sept 20), pan India hotels operated at an average occupancy of 9 per cent at an average room rate of ₹2,500 per room per night. However, during the same period, branded hotels witnessed an occupancy of 23 per cent with an average room rate of ₹3,910 per room per night.

Staycations and weekend getaways picking up pace post the travel restrictions have eased coupled with the confidence travellers have in branded

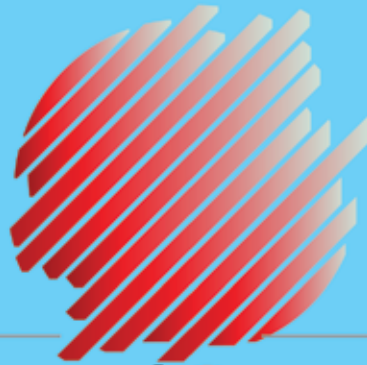
hotels in terms of health and hygiene facilities, have fueled the demand revival for branded hotels. "With the easing of travel restrictions and confidence on branded hotel chains, in the next two quarters which are termed as peak quarters for hotels, leisure demand in the country is expected to soar at a faster rate compared to business destinations", says **Nandivardhan Jain**, CEO, Noesis Capital Advisors.

During the first quarter of the fiscal (Apr 20- June 20), the majority of hotel demand across the operational hotels was coming from Vande Bharat Mission, medical staff, and people opting for a hotel quarantine when tested positive. However, post the easing of travel restrictions, Indians have started travelling again with the majority of them looking for staycations to step out of their homes and use these facilities as their workstations. The second form of travel is coming from weekend getaways which are fueling demand for leisure destinations and/or urban tourism destinations surrounding the top metro and tier-1 destinations.



**With the easing of travel restrictions
leisure demand is expected to soar**





QualSTAR
COVID COMPLIANCE

In accordance with ISO/IEC 17065:2012

**The only accredited
Covid compliance certification
body in India**

**Reach out to us for your
Covid compliance
certificate**



NABCB Accreditation

India's first NABCB Accredited certification
Body for Hotels COVID Compliance

NABCB (Nation accreditation Board for certification bodies) constituent board of QCI (Quality Council of India) an autonomous body under the Department for promotion of industry and internal trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

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Sector Regional Presidents opine that the government needs to have a hospitality specific outlook.

SPECIFIC NEEDS

Neha Rawat



Sherry Bhatia
President, HRAWI

50% JOB LOSS FOR PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN THE SECTOR

As of today, there have been no foreign exchange earnings and the revenues stand at less than 10 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. The hospitality sector is facing an existential crisis. As things stand today, achieving even 25 per cent of pre-pandemic revenues in the near future seems very unlikely.

Prior to the lockdown, the industry supported 87.5 million jobs, translating to 12.75 per cent of total employment for the year 2018-19. The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis will cause 50 per cent job loss

Achieving even 25% of pre-pandemic revenues in the near future seems very unlikely

for people employed in the sector.

HOSPITALITY SPECIFIC OUTLOOK NEEDED

We request the government to have a hospitality specific outlook considering the peculiarity of this industry. Loan extensions like the ones given under the Prime Minister's scheme for loans below ₹25 crores to SMEs and MSMEs should also be given to the hospitality sector.

Also, banks should be directed to restructure accounts that were standard assets as on March 1, 2020 and banks should not have discretionary power to reject the proposal on any grounds.

BLEAK BUSINESS SCENARIO

The lockdown caused hospitality players close to seven months of revenue loss and mounting debts.

The industry faces a bleak business scenario for at least the next one year. If not an interest waiver, then we suggest the banks be directed to charge interest on loans at fixed deposit rates plus two per cent capped at nine per cent, at least for a year.

In the current scenario, if the government does not take enough measures to save our industry now, we are afraid it will collapse.



Sudesh Poddar
President, HRAEI

REVENUE LOSS OF APPROX ₹90,000 CR IN 2020

The overall Indian hospitality sector (including organised, unorganised and semi-organised operators) is expected to incur

Foreign exchange earnings are nil & domestic earnings are not even 10% of the pre-COVID revenues

an estimated total revenue loss of approximately ₹90,000 cr in 2020, according to a study by HVS ANAROCK. Occupancy and average daily rate (ADR) are expected to reach pre-COVID levels by 2022 and 2023 respectively, assuming that a vaccine is in place by early 2021 and becomes widely available before the end of the year, the study adds. Our

business is in deep trouble, an unprecedented one ever since the World Wars. The situation is worse for those entrepreneurs who invested in the tourism and hospitality sector before the pandemic. They were hit hard by COVID-19. With zero business they had a hard time paying their staff, rentals for their property and also the utility bills. Some of them are on the verge of going bust. HRAEI has been appealing for moratoriums on loan repayment and relaxation on interest rates on loans for them to the Central and all state governments in eastern India. Unfortunately, we have not received any response from any governments.

RELIEF PACKAGE NEEDED URGENTLY

The industry immediately needs a specific relief package to save the sector from an imminent collapse. If a favourable policy is not drawn then at least 40-50 per cent restaurants and 30-40 per cent hotels will have to shut down with 4 crore job losses.

The industry is facing an existential crisis as the foreign exchange earnings are nil, and the domestic earnings are not even 10 per cent of the pre-COVID revenues. We also need a complete review of the KV Kamath Committee proposed stringent guidelines on restructuring of COVID-19 impacted loans adopted by the RBI.



K. Syama Raju
President, SIHRA

REQUESTING FOR INDUSTRY STATUS

We met the Hon'ble Chief Minister, government of Karnataka and presented a memorandum requesting industry status for the hospitality industry just like in the state of Maharashtra. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka assured us that he will assess the proposal and revert soon. Also, we presented a memorandum requesting the relaxation on demand charges and property tax waiver for hotels in Karnataka, for which the Hon'ble Chief Minister assured us that he will consider both requests.

MAJOR INITIATIVES BY SIHRA

With various efforts from SIHRA, many resorts across Southern India witnessed good business especially during weekends. We have represented to the TN government / FSSAI and released approximately ₹129.73 crore payment pending towards the accommodation provided by hotels to doctors and nurses. SIHRA also organised an interaction with Hon'ble Revenue Minister of Tamil Nadu jointly with CII and Travel Club. The Director - Operations of SIHRA participated in the meeting and expressed the concerns of the hoteliers in the state. Subsequently we met

the Hon'ble Chief Minister and presented a memorandum with our concerns. In Kerala, SIHRA coordinated various classifications which were pending for a long time. More than 30 hotels got classified within a short duration.

SUPPORTING SERVICE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

SIHRA honoured 85 years old Smt Kamalathal from Vadelampalayam village near



We released ₹130 crore payment pending for accommodation

Coimbatore. She has been serving the village for the past 50 years by selling delicious Idlis @ one rupee. She earns up to ₹100 in a day and says that if anyone is not able to pay one rupee, she offers the Idlis free of cost. We have assured all support to her to continue the service.

SOCIAL GATHERING LIMIT & BAR TIMINGS

SIHRA presented a memorandum to the Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, government of Tamil Nadu requesting to increase the social gathering limit from 50 to 200 people to encourage more business to hotels. Our request was considered, and the limit was increased to 100 people for weddings and other social events. Bars in Tamil Nadu were allowed to open after SIHRA's representation to the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, but they were allowed to operate till 8 pm only. With our consistent representations and follow-up, the TN government extended the bar timings till 10 pm.



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President, HRANI

FAR-REACHING ECONOMIC DAMAGE

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on the country's economy. The hospitality sector is among the worst affected, as hotels and restaurants had to close during this pandemic, resulting in an unprecedented loss of revenue and jobs.

The hospitality sector is already facing a catastrophic situation due to lockdown & shutdown of operations since March 22, 2020. The establishments which have reopened are also thinking of closing down due to low occupancy, lack of minimum business due to limited flight operations and quarantine rules. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant and far-reaching economic damage to the hospitality industry.

It is no secret that hospitality is one of the worst affected industries as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Zero business during the first seven months of the lockdown, negative cash flows, threats of insolvency and millions of jobs losses have devastated the sector completely.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDED IMMEDIATELY

The hospitality industry seeks a much-needed financial life raft

to buoy through the next few months until a vaccine is in mass production. We are expecting complete interest waiver for the hospitality industry from government; a complete review of the Kamath Committee recommendations on priority basis; no credit rating of loans by credit rating agencies working under SEBI guidelines until September 2021; and working capital requirement as a soft loan with low interest. Financial support of this nature will help businesses cover for the required working capital which in turn will help them sustain. Having registered only 20-30 per cent of the average pre-pandemic revenues across the country, the businesses are finding it more and more difficult to sustain with each passing day,

Our industry was the first to be locked and the last one to be reopened. So when we ask the government for support, it is because the government asked us to not conduct business for the longest duration.



The industry seeks a much-needed financial life raft to buoy through the next few months

INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS ESSENTIAL FOR REVIVAL

Tax incentives are needed for hotels making capital expenditures to abide by the organisation's Safe Stay heightened health and cleaning initiative as well as liability protection for hotels against coronavirus exposure claims. Infrastructure status to the hospitality sector for its revival is the need of the hour.

Are you COVID compliant?

It is important to put a stamp on safety protocols so that customers can differentiate between a COVID-safety-compliant and non-compliant enterprise.

Little was the world aware that what began as an epidemic towards the end of year 2019 would ultimately wreak havoc over lives and livelihoods. As year 2020 commenced, it was amply clear that the novel coronavirus was here to stay. While people battled its ill-effects & governments raced to seal both domestic and international borders, COVID-19 slowly seeped into business and industry. The first, and the most impacted, was tourism and hospitality. In mid-June, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), in its research note titled 'Travel & Tourism Recovery Scenarios 2020 and Economic Impact from COVID-19', predicted that as many as 197.5 million jobs could be lost. In October, WTTC stated that despite a slight improvement since June, a staggering 174 million travel & tourism jobs could still be lost.

Finding a solution to a global pandemic of this scale and ruin was no easy task. Tourism and hospitality associations across the globe joined hands to help business resume and gradually ease border restrictions so people could travel (if only out of necessity at the beginning) and the industry could set foot into a recovery of sorts. The hospitality industry, however, was still awaiting a helping hand. India's apex hospitality



VK Duggal

and restaurant conglomeration, the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), along with several others, presented to the government updates on the industry's health and the urgent need for relief.

With the hospitality industry having witnessed a decline in revenues to the extent of 60-70 per cent as compared to 2019, it was predicted that almost 50 to 60 per cent of the total jobs that the industry provided could be lost if it was not revived. Gradually, hotels were allowed to operate (some of them even as hospitals in the beginning), but under strict guidelines that called for only a limited number of rooms to be occupied at a time; regular sanitisation of public areas, surfaces, etc., shooting up operating costs ever more with revenues still at an all-time low.

Numerous studies and research conducted across the globe suggest that for the tourism and hospitality industry to recover from the devastating effects of the pandemic on business, building traveller confidence is paramount. To achieve that, it is imperative to assure prospective customers and clients of the strict adherence to safety and hygiene guidelines. But, merely following a set of protocols is not enough; it is important to put a stamp on these measures, so customers can differentiate between a COVID-safety-compliant and non-compliant enterprise. While customers easily trust branded hotels and believe in their adherence to safety protocols, it is difficult for the smaller ones (including apartment hotels, other rental accommodation and banquet halls) to compete on that ground. Thus comes in the



**Today, to win the confidence of a guest,
safety and hygiene are a priority**

QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme.

What is QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme?

QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is a certification that assures patrons of the respective hotel's or accommodation provider's strict adherence to COVID-safety guidelines. It has been accredited by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) that falls under the umbrella of Quality Council of India (QCI), an undertaking of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. It aims to provide an objective assessment of the preventive measures adopted by hotels to mitigate COVID-related risks and hazards.

QualSTAR is the first and only COVID Compliance Certification Agency in India which has been accredited by NABCB (a member of International Accreditation Forum or IAF) in line with international standards for the accommodation sector. The QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is based on guidelines by WHO, Ministry of Tourism, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and other government organisations.

How does the scheme work?

The QualSTAR certification process broadly involves three crucial stages, viz. Registration (Stage 1), Application (Stage 2) & Audit (Stage 3) with several steps under each for the impartial certification of accommodations.

THE QUALSTAR ADVANTAGE

QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme has been formulated by industry experts with years of extensive experience behind them, and founded under the patronage of **VK Duggal**, former Governor of Manipur and Mizoram; former Director General – Tourism, Government of India; and former Union Home Secretary. He says, "In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the imminent need to consider a national certification system based on the broad guidelines for safety and hygiene formulated by the government and international organisations has come to the forefront. Today, to win the confidence of a guest, safety and hygiene are a



NABCB accreditation programmes are internationally recognised



Rajesh Maheshwari

priority. Getting the right message across to them through authentic certification is the means to do it. The QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is meant to do just that."

Detailing the benefits of an NABCB accreditation, **Rajesh Maheshwari**, CEO, NABCB, says, "NABCB is the national accreditation body in India for accreditation of certification and inspection bodies, and is established by the government as one of the constituent Boards under the Quality Council of India. NABCB accreditation programmes are internationally recognised by being signatory to the international multilateral mutual recognition agreements / arrangement (MLAs / MRAs). The accredited certificate or report issued by a certification body or inspection body under NABCB accreditation will have international acceptance, recognition, as the competence of the accredited body has been independently assessed as per the standards/regulations/schemes specified in the scope of accreditation granted by NABCB. Accreditation provides an assurance to the clients or the users, on the accredited conformity assessment (certification / inspection) results for the products and/or services they use."



Manoj Virmani, Hospitality Consultant and former VP, ITC Hotels, who has worked for nearly 40 years in the hospitality industry in multiple areas, most notably around quality initiatives (Six Sigma, Brand Standards, Business Excellence, Operational Audits & Compliance Monitoring), stresses on the importance of adherence to standardised international ISO protocols of auditing and the benefits of the discipline of continued quality assurance.

He says, "These are the foundations on which QualSTAR has been able to build a sound certification system both for classification and COVID compliance. Systems built on quality and subsequently verified by an accredited national body with international affiliation, in my opinion, are a progressive stance adopted by QualSTAR to bring credibility to the process of certification which to date remains unregulated the world over." Virmani is an empanelled auditor for QualSTAR, executing audits as Lead Auditor for various hotel properties.



Manoj Virmani




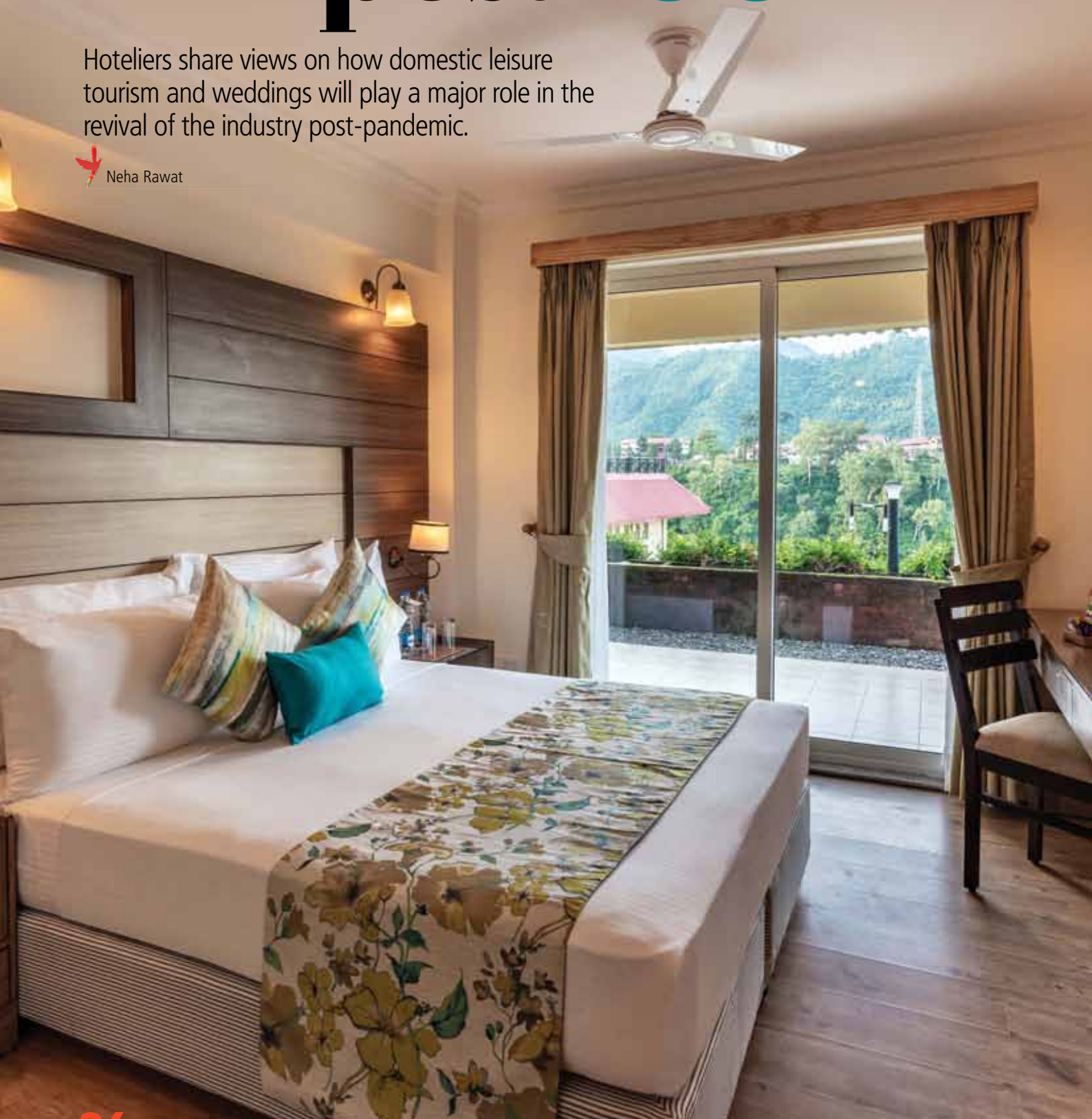
QualSTAR has been able to build a sound certification system



Demand drivers post-COVID

Hoteliers share views on how domestic leisure tourism and weddings will play a major role in the revival of the industry post-pandemic.

 Neha Rawat



Sarbendra Sarkar
Founder and Managing Director
Cygnett Hotels and Resorts

How will domestic travel, MICE & weddings drive post-COVID demand?

People like to 'get-away' from their routine, their day-to-day existence and do something adventurous, fun, educative, relaxing or all of these together. COVID-19 has put a spoke of everyone's holiday wheels. This is why I feel post-COVID the market will bounce back better than before COVID. Especially, domestic leisure travel as it is going to be a while before international travel revives.

In fact, the numbers for the hospitality industry are looking quite good post-COVID. According to the Horwath HTL survey, domestic business and leisure travel will be either at par (67 per cent) or better (20 per cent) than the pre-COVID-19 period; over 91 per cent of the participants indicated that MICE and weddings segment will be at par (64 per cent) or better (27 per cent) in the post-pandemic period. In addition to this, the post-COVID hospitality industry will be expected to uphold the highest levels of safety, health and hygiene of guests as well as staff to earn guest loyalty and trust.

How is your hotel/restaurant dealing with the change as a major chunk comprises of weddings or small MICE gatherings?

There has been a steep decline in the overall business and MICE is one part of it. Our relationships with the corporates are strong now as they were before COVID. However, due to this health crisis, corporates are refraining from conducting any MICE events and all planned events/conferences have been deferred to a future date. Also, 'work from home' has been a major contributor to this. At the moment, we are concentrating on our core business – Stay and F&B. The market is beginning to pick up and we have slowly started getting leisure bookings and wedding enquiries.

Each property is making considerable efforts to ensure that all initiated safety protocols are effectively implemented and all guest needs are fulfilled. Also, our sales & marketing teams across India are constantly following with propitious clients for MICE & events enquiries.

Will domestic leisure market be key in the coming times?

Absolutely, people are waiting to get out of their homes and the earlier fear has slowly started to ebb. This with the hospitality industry working overtime to ensure highest levels of hygiene and sanitation has helped people slowly start getting away often. Weekend 'get-aways' have increased rapidly. At Cygnett, we are using our presence on multiple digital/social platforms to stay connected to our target audience. This consistent

communication is yielding positive results for our leisure properties as we have a lot of enquiries coming in. However, a vaccine is the only way for the entire hospitality industry to bounce back.

Any notable innovation/changes that you made during this time?

As the market revives, properties that meet top-notch sanitation expectations will be in the best position to benefit from the early demand. At Cygnett, our number one priority at this point is the health and safety of our staff, guests and everyone associated with us. All our innovation/changes are aligned to provide the most



Sarbendra Sarkar



convenient, safe and comfortable stay for our guests (QR coded menus, contactless service experience, good selection of immune boosting cuisines, etc.). Additionally, we have introduced several offers such as a 6-hour package for guests who do not intend to stay overnight and weekend staycation offers, etc.

Anything else you would like to mention?

We pay special interest to a guest experience post check-out to understand their point of view and constantly better our services. Also, we monitor target audience online behaviour to consistently comprehend their needs and thus ensure that we are on top of our game when it comes to online searches for bookings.



We have slowly started getting leisure bookings and wedding enquiries





Vikas Suri

Vikas Suri
Sr. Associate Vice President
Lords Hotels & Resorts

How will domestic travel, MICE & weddings drive post-COVID demand?

Hotel recovery is led by domestic leisure segment, which is peaking on weekends and during festive holidays. Corporate travel recovery has also begun in some markets and is seeing a steady increase. MICE sector recovery is led mostly by weddings.

Once the lockdown was lifted, we saw an immediate surge in staycations, vacations, local trips, daily dining and intimate social gatherings. This has been further boosted as restrictions on outbound travel continue.

Currently small meetings are not seeing a return from the virtual platforms adopted during the lockdown. It is a matter of time, as in-person interaction and networking cannot be replaced by virtual events.

How is your hotel/restaurant dealing with the change as a major chunk comprises of weddings or small MICE gatherings?

We have all the necessary services and an experienced team to plan and execute weddings and other social gatherings efficiently. Our group has enforced quality and safety standards across all properties. Protocols include contactless registration, thermal scanning, face masks, elevated hygiene and social distancing. Each property has not only met but exceeded cleaning quality requirements and completed the COVID-19 checklist and hygiene audit.

Will domestic leisure market be key in the coming times?

Domestic leisure market will be key in the coming times since it plays a major role in revival of the business. We have recently launched an elite resort at Rajkot, spread over 11 acres. We will shortly be opening a resort in Jammu, spread over 15 acres. The extensive lawns and banqueting space at both the venues are best suited for MICE & weddings. Our other leisure destinations are also seeing a surge in the number of bookings for the upcoming season.

Any notable innovation/changes that you made during this time?

Our safe stay initiative Karona Safe Rahona Safe is based on the guidelines of WHO and FSSAI. The enhanced protocols include social distancing, thermal screening of each attendee, sanitisation, thermal screening of guests, disinfectant foggers are placed in indoor convention spaces and touchless sanitiser is placed near the entrance of every venue.

As per the current situation we are also offering virtual as well as in-person options to our guests at our venues. We have modified our SOPs and done changes as required for effective crowd monitoring. Disinfection of function halls, corridors and public spaces by using electrostatic sprayers, enhanced air filtration system for ventilation, moving toward contactless and digitalisation operations are some of the changes which have been adopted.



Our leisure destinations are seeing a surge in the number of bookings





Saumitra Chaturvedi General Manager ibis Jaipur Civil Lines

How will domestic travel, MICE & weddings drive post-COVID demand?

As we move into the 'new normal', travellers are looking at ways to relax and rejuvenate themselves, while giving utmost importance to safety and hygiene. Staycations and workcations are emerging as the latest trends as people are looking to break the monotony after months of lockdown. It is very encouraging to see an uptick in wedding queries too. Indian weddings have always been more than events, and once considered lavish affairs have now become more intimate and close-knit. At ibis Jaipur with offerings like exquisite poolside area, curated, and customised F&B options while maintaining all the safety protocols, it is encouraging to see a rise in wedding queries. Additionally, as Jaipur is a short drive away from NCR we are happy to see an encouraging demand in staycations/weekend getaways. Observing the current trend, it can be ascertained that domestic tourism, weddings & staycations will be the primary sources of the revival of the hospitality sector.

How is your hotel/restaurant dealing with the change as a major chunk comprises of weddings or small MICE gatherings?

It's important that we continue to re-think and re-imagine alternate revenue streams to meet the demands of the changing times. In the 'new now' brands are creating meaningful offers which speak to the needs of guests and will lead the way to recovery. Since a lot of people are still working from home, we have converted

our spaces into workspaces at affordable prices. We are also available on all major online delivery platforms to bring our culinary experiences from Spice It – our casual dining restaurant, to the doorstep of our guests.

Will domestic leisure market be key in the coming times?

The domestic leisure market is unequivocally the key focus for the entire hospitality industry as outbound tourism is still far-fetched. However, we are hopeful that domestic tourism is gradually picking up pace and there is an uptick in staycations/weekend breaks.

Any notable innovation/changes that you made during this time?

At ibis, we have undertaken a plethora of innovations, including moving to contactless menu and ordering software at all our outlets to foraying into food delivery. In our casual dining restaurant, Spice It, all physical menus have been replaced with a QR code for digital menu access. We have launched the work@ibis concept to utilise our meeting spaces. The concept is picking up and will gather more traction once corporates announce the return of team members back to work.



Saumitra Chaturvedi



The domestic leisure market is the key focus for the hospitality industry



‘Work-cations’ picking up

Working from hotels or ‘work-cation’ has not only emerged as the latest trend, but also an innovative solution for hotels to earn revenue.



Nisha Verma



Rohit Chopra

Rohit Chopra

Regional Director – Sales & Distribution, India & South Asia, Accor

Many of our hotels are offering ‘Work@Hotel’ by providing a safe, alternative working space to individuals and organisations looking to work remotely. Amenities like high-speed Wi-Fi, 24/7 food and beverage options, on the go office facilities like printing and scanning, high regard for privacy, helpful team members on call and well curated spaces are available.

AVAILABLE AT

Sofitel Mumbai BKC, Novotel hotels in Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Goa, Chennai, Kolkata and ibis hotels are offering a dedicated plug and play office space which can be clubbed with add-ons such as F&B options, special rate for an overnight stay and much more.

FUTURE

The concept of coworking spaces has gained immense popularity in the last few months. A shift from traditional ways of working, is seen as a noteworthy opportunity for the hospitality industry to generate additional revenue. The strategy of thoughtfully distributing spaces and services by the hospitality industry, will take this concept far.

TIE-UPS

Enabling Accor’s augmented hospitality architecture Live, Work, Play; ‘Work’ covers the brands catering to the growing demand for coworking services. Globally, with our brands WOJO and Mama Works, we are bringing our expertise in hospitality and business solutions to modern coworking spaces – with offers and spaces to suit everyone, from freelancers to small businesses. In India, we are also open to collaborations with coworking firms in our properties across brands.



The strategy of distributing spaces and services will take this concept far



Rishi Puri

Rishi Puri

Sr. Vice President, Lords Hotels and Resorts

Lords Hotels and Resorts offers lucrative packages in which stay at the hotel and access to office infrastructure are bundled with meals. Companies are extending work from home, owing to increase in COVID cases. It is also another avenue for us to generate revenues. As an added feature ₹1000 meal credit is on offer on bookings made through the brand website.

AVAILABLE AT

Our 39 hotels across 10 states and two countries offer work from hotel facility. Working spaces with a work

desk, uninterrupted Wi-Fi, in-room dining, and on the go facilities like printing and scanning can be availed.

Customised packages are available for hourly, daily and monthly usage.

FUTURE

Employees are going for workcations, a trend which is picking up. Since companies are extending work from home indefinitely, this culture will stay post-COVID as well.

TIE-UPS

As a chain we would prefer to start our own programme and the detailed planning is already underway.



We offer lucrative packages in which stay at the hotel is bundled with meals

Pradipta Mohapatra

Asst. Vice President – Sales & Marketing, Mayfair Hotels & Resorts

Though on a smaller scale, we have offered work from hotel options to some companies, consequent to their request.

AVAILABLE AT

Our properties mainly in Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Rourkela are offering this facility. However, given our state-of-the-art banqueting and event spaces, all our 12 properties are adequately equipped to cater to the demand in this category and if need be, we shall certainly consider scaling up our offerings in this segment.

FUTURE

It is a promising source of alternate revenue for hotel brands who can capitalise on it to make effective use of their spaces. Now as there is a restriction on large-scale gatherings, hotels may consider these alternate sources of revenue but as and when demand picks up,

it will be a very tricky territory to manage as every hotel has limited space and from the revenue perspective, events and weddings are any day more rewarding.

TIE-UPS

Being in business, anything that fits in our scheme of things to earn revenue, we could certainly explore that option and in this case too, if we get any worthy proposal, which suits our business agenda and target, there is no harm in tying up with any company. So yes, we would.



Pradipta Mohapatra



All our 12 properties are equipped to cater to the demand in this category



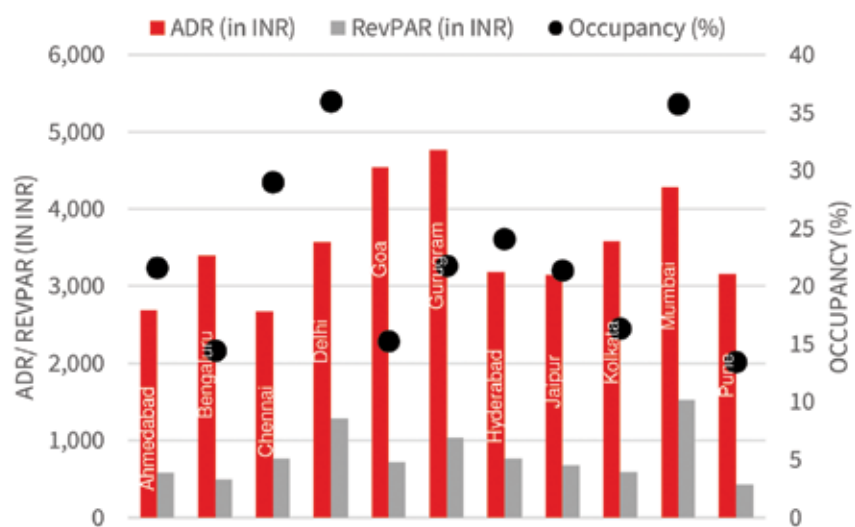
Industry sees 52.8% decline in RevPAR

All key 11 markets in India reported a significant decline in RevPAR performance in Q3 2020 Y-o-Y, according to JLL's Hotel Momentum India, a hospitality sector monitor.

India's hospitality industry has witnessed decline of 52.8 per cent in Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) during January to September (YTD Sept) 2020 over the same period last year due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, according to JLL's Hotel Momentum India (HMI) Q3 2020, a quarterly hospitality sector monitor. Overall, in inventory volume, the brand signings declined by 19 per cent in Q3 2020 over Q3 2019, however international operators signed a greater number of keys than domestic ones.

All key 11 markets in India reported a decrease in RevPAR performance in Q3 2020 over the same period last year. Mumbai continues to be the RevPAR leader in absolute terms, despite the decline of RevPAR by 71.7 per cent in Q3 2020

Q3 2020 PERFORMANCE TREND CHART



QUARTERLY MONITOR

Key Hotel Market Performance			
Cities	Q3 2020		
	Change Over Same Period Last Year		
	Occupancy Change (pp)	ADR Change (%)	RevPAR Change (%)
Ahmedabad	-40.1 ↓	-27.2 ↓	-74.6 ↓
Bengaluru	-54.3 ↓	-43.1 ↓	-88.1 ↓
Chennai	-36.5 ↓	-45.7 ↓	-76.4 ↓
Delhi	-36.0 ↓	-40.4 ↓	-70.5 ↓
Goa	-38.9 ↓	-27.2 ↓	-78.8 ↓
Gurugram	-47.9 ↓	-13.7 ↓	-73.3 ↓
Hyderabad	-47.0 ↓	-32.8 ↓	-77.5 ↓
Jaipur	-40.2 ↓	-14.1 ↓	-70.2 ↓
Kolkata	-49.0 ↓	-29.7 ↓	-82.6 ↓
Mumbai	-37.3 ↓	-42.1 ↓	-71.7 ↓
Pune	-56.3 ↓	-27.6 ↓	-86.2 ↓

Source: STR



Bengaluru saw 88.1% decline in RevPAR in Q3 2020

compared to Q3 2019 whereas Bengaluru saw the sharpest decline in RevPAR in Q3 2020, with 88.1 per cent decline compared to the same period last year.

According to the findings of HMI Q3 2020, international operators dominated signings over domestic operators with the ratio of 53:47 in terms of inventory volume. Demand in leisure destinations began seeing weekend occupancy spikes as the lockdown restrictions were further lifted in August. Other cities such as Pune (86.2 per cent), Kolkata (82.6 per cent) and Goa (78.8 per cent) also witnessed sharp declines in RevPAR.

"Investors are taking interest in exploring operational hotel opportunities both in business and in leisure locations. With the phased unlocking of the economy in the third quarter of 2020, we are witnessing gradual growth in demand particularly in leisure market with weekend occupancy spikes", says **Jaideep Dang**, Managing Director, Hotels & Hospitality Group (India), JLL.

The total number of signings in the third quarter of 2020 stood at 24 hotels comprising of 2,314 keys recording a decline of 19 per cent compared to the same period last year.



An uphill journey

This is the time to reset the clock and be critical about areas where changes are needed, says **Fredrik Blomqvist**, General Manager, Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru.



Steena Joy

How are you dealing with the pandemic?

In step with the hospitality Unlock, we have reopened the hotel here in Bangalore with a meticulous hygiene programme in place. We also have strict focus on the revised operating guidelines to operate in a safe and accurate manner. The reality is that the market will remain slow with the international flights still on hold and restrictions in place. This is the time to reset the clock, continue doing what worked well and be critical about areas where changes are needed, we need to adjust our operations and this is the time to be constructive and effective.

Four Seasons has launched 'Lead With Care', an enhanced global health and safety programme that is being implemented at properties worldwide, including here at Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru. The teams are trained to extend their usual unscripted service but physical distancing is very much the order of the day. Food & Beverage is very much front and centre of the game and that has been a very positive thing for us.

What are you doing to boost occupancies?

The brand strategy, especially in Asia Pacific has been to help each other out and we have implemented a great incentive driven programme for our sales teams to benefit by promoting and selling each other across the region. We always have an excellent amount of support and guidance, which makes it easier for us to get out of this crisis. This has also iterated a synergy among

all the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts across the region. This can also be seen on social media with our #FSAsiaStories hashtag where different Four Seasons hotels are promoted, one by one, with a view to entice guests to dream up their next travel idea.

Do you think we are on the path to recovery?

I wish the road ahead would be more predictable for all of us, but frankly speaking, we need to be prepared for a long, winding and uphill recovery period! However, this a great time to ideate and think out of the box. Transforming al fresco spaces into meeting venues, tapping the staycation segment, crafting great banquet menus to be served at the table, improvising on our takeaway offerings (we have just introduced Bento Boxes which have been very well accepted) etc. are all ways in which we can brace up to current times and have a positive outlook. Also, restaurants and bars will see a faster recovery once the restrictions have been removed.

We will have to look through a much wider lens and it will serve us well to promote Bangalore as a destination, and not just Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru, to our global guests.



Fredrik Blomqvist



We need to adjust our operations, this is the time to be constructive & effective

Operating remotely

We offer co-branding, complete revenue management, centralised reservations & accounts reconciliation, says **Chandan Pandey**, Co-Founder & COO, WB Hotels & Resorts.



Neha Rawat



Chandan Pandey

What is the concept behind this new brand 'WB Hotels & Resorts'?

WB Hotels & Resorts is offering services to hotels, resorts, BNB, service apartments & townships (second homes – an untapped market with potential of one lakh+ keys to start with). We are offering co-branding (only on an online platform), complete revenue management, centralised reservations, accounts reconciliation at our Mumbai regional sales office. By way of technology to asset owners, channel manager and Cloud-based front office

software is provided in a bundled package. Technically we are running the hotels remotely and we do not charge any upfront payment, we work on commission basis only. Also, we can scale our brand globally within no time.

The hotels which became part of WB Hotels & Resorts within 30 days of the brand being launched include, Raj Residency by WB Hotels – Coorg; The Bollywood Hotel by WB Hotels – Bhubaneswar; Grand Surya by WB Hotels – Kodarma, Jharkhand; Surya by WB Hotels – Kodarma, Jharkhand; Vacation Club By WB Resorts – Karjat, Maharashtra; Vacation Club Grand Villas by WB Resorts, Karjat – Maharashtra; Stay Inn by WB Hotels, Andheri – Mumbai; Sunshine Villa by WB Hotels – Igatpuri, Maharashtra; Manas by WB Hotels – Dhule, Maharashtra; and Grand Villas by WB Resorts – Lonavala, Maharashtra.

We are growing fast and looking at 3,000 keys by March 2021 and 10,000+ keys by December 2022 under WB Hotels brand. Also, we are expecting gross revenue of 70 crores+ annually by end of 2021.

What is WB Hotels & Resorts doing to support the hospitality sector in these tough times?

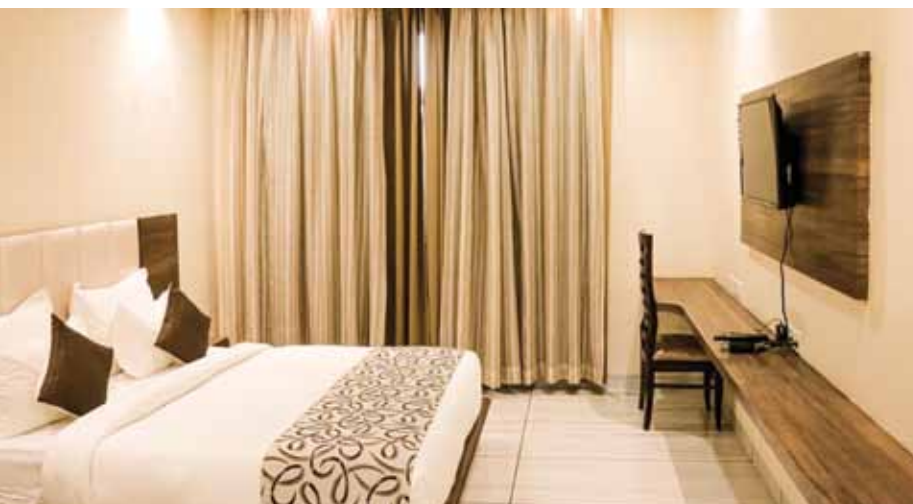
We are bringing the unorganised (standalone hotels) hospitality sector under organised umbrellas, creating professional job opportunities and maximising ROI for asset owners at the lowest cost. Hotel owners are getting brands and other services without spending any money. All risk is taken by WB Hotels and we are maximising returns for stakeholders.

How is your flagship brand going to boost the travel & hospitality industry?

Our ideas are being accepted by asset owners and they are willing to partner with WB Hotels. Our professional team can increase hotel occupancy and guest experiences. We offer higher ARR for hotel owners and reasonable rates for the guests, a win-win situation for everyone. Our promise is to provide a safe and hygienic place to stay in at the most reasonable price, hence it will result in higher occupancy.

Anything else you would like to mention?

Our brand is very promising, there are no fake commitments and no unrealistic offers. We are here to give good ROI to asset owners and also remain profitable at the corporate level.



We are looking at 3,000 keys by March 2021 and 10,000+ keys by Dec 2022





Hybrid hospitality

Rishiraj Singh Anand, Joint Managing Director, Jagsons Travels and GPS, shares that in their recent corporate event almost 1,000 delegates from across India participated.



Manas Dwivedi

As they say, nothing comes easy, you have to think out of the box and make things work for yourself, such has been **Rishiraj Singh Anand's** belief and hard work which showcased there is plenty of opportunity to do business in the MICE industry despite the pandemic. Sharing the idea and success story of the activity, which also indicates early signs of revival for business, Singh explains, "The corporate travel movement, has taken a big hit, but since September, we have kind of seen a growth in movement. People are not travelling for business, taking flights or spending on hotels, so we had to come up with unique ideas using the technology and introduce the hybrid model of events to do business, virtually or through different other means.

We recently hosted one of our largest corporate events that, almost 1,000 delegates from across India participated where delegates were located in remote places as well, starting from the metros on the way up to tier-II, III and IV as well. We had delegates located at the branch offices of the corporate at these remote locations. We did conduct a full day corporate event with lot of activities for them."

Not only just activities, the team also organised meals for delegates in a unique way. "Apart from all this, we also arranged three time meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) as well as the evening high tea to be delivered in each of the branches across India. For this, we did a unique tie-up to source food for us from nationalised

and international food chains like Marriot, where ever it was possible. In remote locations, we went in for popular local options. At the end, the client was really happy with our efforts and execution since they never thought that something like this can be done," he shared.

With this unique initiative, Singh feels they have set the tone for restarting business in the corporate sector. "We are working on more technologically advanced events and giving these ideas to the clients as well, so that we can do more of such events," he said.

"Corporate events can still take place, they need not be with physical presence at the venue. It can be done as a hybrid event as well. Also in comparison to a larger event, if you look at the logistics and the finance part, these events work out much more economical than physical events for the clients and for the corporate as well. Clients with a smaller budget can opt for these hybrid events. This is going to be the future. I don't say that the onsite events won't happen, that industry will stay as it is because the human touch is always required, but this is going to be the new category of events in the corporate world," Singh concluded.



Rishiraj Singh Anand



We have set the tone for restarting business in the corporate sector



Mindful moments

Tea helps to attain a state of mindfulness – a much needed recipe for this time of COVID-19, says **Aman Dewan**, Country Head – HORECA at TGL.



I came to understand that a good cuppa tea with the right ingredients can make all the difference, almost like a solemn ceremony for mindfulness, almost a form of meditation. A friend and I decided to embark upon this contemplative journey of mindfulness with tea, in a nice cool corner place at our terrace.

The first step is to identify the appropriate tea for the ritual, depending on the time of the day or your mood. There is no right or wrong, just choose what you feel like going forward with. After some trials and tea tasting, we came up with a list of teas we tasted, to suit the time of day. Here's our recommendations:

English Breakfast Black Tea – A perfect Assam blend that is your good morning tea. It has the malty finish and strong taste to give you that much needed morning kick especially on a lazy morning. You can add a dash of milk or simply have black tea with lemon.

Lemon Detox Green Tea – A truly exceptional green tea with lemon, a bright yellow cup that zings with lemony freshness and lingers long after drinking. Great for spas and serves as a post workout beverage.

Orange and Mango Oolong tea – Distinctively fruity notes from mango, orange peel and pineapple flavours, blended with a luscious, creamy semi-fermented Milk Oolong tea. The first sip reveals fruity flavours with prominent citrus notes followed by a soothing creamy aftertaste of lingering vanilla finish, all good for post lunch reflections.

Mogo Mogo Green Tea – Happy notes of bananas, mango, melons and guava hit your palate as you take in the first sip of this fruity blend followed by floral nuances of sunflowers and cornflowers. A good brew in early evening or while reading a book.

Sweet Dreams – This tisane is meant for instant stress relief. Tiny dry petals of Chamomile instantly get to work at the first sip, lending a citrusy yet floral mouthfeel. Overall, the blend has a simple herbal taste with enhanced nuances of chamomile – just about everything you need for a good night's sleep.

Remember to enjoy tea like a ceremony. Enjoy every sip and savour in your mindful moment as apart from destressing, great ideas emerge during such times, mine sure did..



Aman Dewan

Centuries ago, when tea was discovered in China and introduced to Buddhist culture in monasteries, it was already used for medicine and meditation. There's no doubt that drinking tea is good for health, but more than that it helps to attain a state of mindfulness – a much needed recipe for this time of COVID-19 where distractions of news reign and lot of reflections happen while staying at home. More than clearing the uncertainty of "what will happen or when will it happen", mindfulness helps to suggest new creative ways of being, of finding solutions.



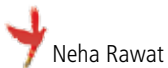
Choose the tea for the ritual, depending on the time of the day or your mood





Holistic wellness

Since COVID-19 we have seen a drastic change in people's perception towards wellness, says **Prasoon Kumar Pandey**, General Manager, Vana, Dehradun.



Neha Rawat

How has the response been for your retreat amid the crisis?

As travel restrictions are slowly lifting, people are eager to start travelling again. Our Vanavasis have shown a lot of interest in visiting Vana again. Most of the queries we are currently receiving are from people ready to anchor their lives with sustainable wellness.

At Vana, wellness is not a pit stop but an ongoing journey that continues even after the Vanavasis resume their normal routines. We look forward to offering the Vana experience to our guests and contributing to an enhanced state of wellbeing.

What major changes have you made to your property?

Spaces at Vana are majestic and transformational. As the retreat is spread over 21 acres, the vastness of its architecture and landscape naturally ensures privacy, as well as safe distance. Although safety and hygiene have been paramount always at Vana, we have undertaken additional measures to ensure a safe space, away from the noise. We are committed to providing a safe and natural environment for our guests and team. The team, which will be catering to our Vanavasis, will be staying in-house.

A non-negotiable requirement to be on the premises for both Vanavasis and the team is to be tested for COVID prior to their arrival at Vana. Additionally, an

upper limit to the number of reservations has been set.

What do you think about the growth of wellness industry in the post-COVID era?

Since COVID-19 is greatly affecting people with low immunity, we have seen a drastic change in people's perception towards wellness. The focus now is on holistic wellness which includes healthy food, nutrition and exercises that enhance immunity. As India offers traditional medicine systems like ayurveda, yoga and Sowa Rigpa, we expect wellness tourism to pick up pace. This has also been reiterated by the GWI (Global Wellness Institute) – wellness tourism will grow at an average annual rate of 7.5 per cent through 2022. Increased awareness about wellness, adopting a healthy lifestyle, and focus on mental wellness will provide a boost to the wellness industry.

Anything else you would like to mention?

We have reduced the prices of the retreat, which now begin at ₹25,000 and include all meals, arrival consultation, personalised treatments and therapies as well as retreat programmes with yoga, meditation, cuisine lessons, functional fitness, talks, music, etc.



Prasoon Kumar Pandey



Wellness tourism will grow at an average annual rate of 7.5% through 2022



Inhabit unveils Let it Bee collection

◆ Inhabit has unveiled a new collection of furniture – Let it Bee, which pays homage to birds and bees through designs that are edgy and opulent at the same time. The Birds and Bees is a collection of five reissues that encapsulate the designer Neeta Kumar's experiences, detailing the wonders, struggles and triumphs of her encounters with these wonderful winged creatures. Each product is a story created to raise awareness about their plight. The collection uses rich tones, age-old materials and finishes. The brass highlights invoke an immediate sense of grandeur, while the charcoal black finish evokes a classy appeal.



Ellementry gift boxes

◆ Lifestyle home décor brand Ellementry's campaign #DistanceDoesn'tMatter offers customers enchanting and useful gift options for the upcoming festivities. The gift sets are inspired by the elements around us – hand-poured eco-friendly soy wax candles in handmade terracotta bowls; Shath-Deep, a six-sided diya set handcrafted by Nemi Prajapat, a well-known local terracotta artisan; and of course, the breakfast sets, trinket boxes, tea cups and coffee mugs all in ceramic, artistically hand-painted by artisans, and many more.

Furniture from Ashley

◆ Ashley Furniture Home Store has unveiled a new range of bedroom furniture brought to India by Dash Square. The Charmond King Sleigh Bed's uniquely luxurious interpretation of traditional style features beautifully flowing elements such as dark bronze-tone metal hardware and a dark brown finish with glazed white accents. Made of reclaimed pine, the Sommerford bed set's ultra clean-lined, chunky profile showcases long butcher-block planking rich with tonal variation, nicks, notches and nail holes. The Lettner King Sleigh Bed with storage is made of veneers, wood and engineered wood..





Alsorg launches home collections

◆ Alsorg has unveiled three immersive experiences for modern homes with all-new designs of luxury furniture pieces and a range of surface finishes. These collections encompass chic furniture pieces, elegant wardrobes, tactile wall panels as well as new metallic finishes. Living Room Collection 1 comprises a tasteful sofa inspired by Japanese architecture. The clustered center table forms the focal point of the living room. Outdoor Furniture Collection uses organic materials such as wood and stone along with plants and natural lighting in the courtyard. Living Room Collection 2 is dominated by the veneer-panelling backdrop, emanating a sense of coziness.



IOTA unveils Kartell's Kabuki collection

◆ This festive season adorn your home in style with Kabuki designed by Ferruccio Laviani for Kartell, a brand available in India through IOTA Boutique Furniture. The Kabuki lamps collection consists of a pendant, a table lamp, and a floor lamp, and is even available in an outdoor version. The table lamp is also available in a 'mini' version. Kabuki floor lamp in crystal is manufactured using thermoplastics and a new spray-moulding technique. The innovative combination of technique and material has allowed Kartell to create a weaving structure that lends itself well to the lamp's unique expression. The expression of this structure is reminiscent of lace reflecting and letting out light in an attractive manner.

Hands unveils 'Sculpted' collection

◆ Hands Carpets has unveiled the 'Sculpted' collection of carpets in fine wool and botanical silk that feature mesmerising 3D handcrafted patterns. Using a mix of techniques, 3D patterns are handcrafted and each element in the pattern is masterfully taken care of to create the lattice or grid-like design, so that the vision stays cohesive from the start to the end. What's best, if you have a design or pattern in mind, you could take it to Hands, and their master craftsmen will recreate it for you, exactly the way you imagined it. That too in a size, colour and material of your choice.



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Appointments



RAJNEESH MALHOTRA

Chief Operating Officer
Chalet Hotels, Mumbai

★ Chalet Hotels has promoted Rajneesh Malhotra to Chief Operating Officer. Malhotra has been instrumental in driving operational strategies for the company in his previous position of Vice President – Operations & Asset Management. Having joined the company in April 2019 and with over 25 years in hotel operations, Malhotra will focus on driving operational excellence continuing to report into Sanjay Sethi, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Chalet Hotels. Malhotra will be based out of Mumbai.



PANKAJ MATHUR

COO, Empyrean Skyview
Projects, New Delhi

★ Empyrean Skyview Projects, focused on the development of mountain tourism and adventure activities, has appointed Pankaj Mathur as Chief Operating Officer for its Travel, Tourism & Hospitality business division. Mathur comes to the new role with almost three decades of experience across numerous brands and disciplines in the hospitality industry, including revenue management, HR solutions, training, global distribution and marketing. He has previously worked with several renowned brands.



NISHANT AGARWAL

General Manager
The Leela Palace Udaipur

★ The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has appointed Nishant Agarwal as the General Manager of The Leela Palace Udaipur. He is an accomplished hotelier and brings two decades of hospitality experience with him with a strong F&B background, having set up operations at various domestic and international hotel brands. Agarwal's multi-property operational experience, leadership skills and comprehensive understanding of the business are distinguishing facets of his career.



RADHIKA DEWAN

Director of Sales & Marketing
Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

★ Radhika Dewan has been appointed as the Director of Sales & Marketing at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel. Dewan's core responsibilities at the hotel will include planning and implementing of the hotel's sales and marketing strategy, maximising the hotel's revenues, exploring business opportunities through events, setting annual budgets, forecasting, analysing revenue reports and strategy amongst others. She has over 13 years of experience in the hospitality industry.



SUDEEP MUKHERJEE

Market Director of Sales – Indore
Sayaji Hotel Indore

★ Sayaji Hotel Indore has appointed Sudeep Mukherjee as the new Market Director of Sales – Indore. Mukherjee brings with him over 12 years of rich and varied experience in sales and marketing. He has strong sales and revenue management skills and a thorough knowledge of the hospitality market. Prior to joining Sayaji Hotel Indore, Mukherjee has worked with several reputed brands such as Crowne Plaza Kathmandu Soaltee, Grand Mercure Bangalore, Marriott Hotels India, ITC Hotels Division, and many more.



SAMSON MATHEWS

Director of Human Resources
Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park

★ Samson Mathews has been appointed as the Director of Human Resources at Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park. Mathews brings with him 24 years of experience in the service industry. His professional journey began as an HR Executive at The Residency Coimbatore and he worked for almost 10 years in the The Residency Group. Mathews has worked in various international hospitality brands such as Marriott International, Starwood International, Mahindra Holidays and Sterling Holidays.



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